

THE FORT HOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE NEWSLETTER

January 25, 2012



FORT HOOD IS STILL "THE GREAT PLACE" "THE FUTURE OF THE ARMY BEGINS AT FORT HOOD"

The information contained in this newsletter is researched and provided by the Fort Hood Customer Service Officer, a Management Analyst of the Plans, Analysis and Integration Office, a Special Staff to the Garrison Commander.

1QT/FY12 ICE Award Winners

Congratulations to the organizations and individuals below who have been selected as winners for the 1QT/FY12 ICE Awards. Awards will be presented at the Hood Hero Awards Ceremony, which is scheduled for 16 Feb 12, from 1130 to 1300 at Club Hood, Grande Ballroom.

TOP Directorate:

DHR - Soldier Services Division
DPTMS - Plans and Operations Division
DOL - Transportation Division

Customer Service "Warrior" Award:

Audrey French - CYSS, Parent Central Services Office
Kimberly Reed - CRDAMC, Patient Services Division
Jennifer Banks - CYSS, Child Youth and School Services

Service Provider Award:

DOL - Transportation, Personal Property
DHR - ID Cards Office
CRDAMC - Harker Heights Medical Home

*****A Special thanks goes out to the Panel Members who took time out of their busy schedule to evaluate all nomination packets.

Do you have someone in mind that deserves to be recognized for their excellent customer service? If so, nominating them is easy. 2nd QTR/FY12 nomination packets are due to the Fort Hood Customer Service Officer in April, so start working on their nomination now. If you have questions or need the nomination packet sent to you, call (254) 258-2744 or email the Fort Hood Customer Service Officer at dale.cowan@us.army.mil.

What the ICE Program is and what it is NOT

What ICE Is:

For the customer:

- + It's a way for customers to provide positive or negative feedback (anonymously or by leaving contact information) related to customer service issues.

- + It allows for customers to provide recommendations for the improvement of the delivery of services.

For management:

- + It's an immediate feedback mechanism for managers to address customer service related issues, not necessarily resolve them. Resolution is a by-product of addressing an issue. Not all issues are resolvable.

What ICE is Not:

- + Contrary to popular belief, it's not an issue resolution process.

- + It's not a commander's hotline for Soldiers to bring command related issues up. There are venues in place for these types of issues (COC, IG, chaplain, BOSS Program, etc.).

- + It's not for civilian employees to complain about other employees or their bosses. Civilians have venues available to them as well (EO, CPAC, etc.).

***When the customer becomes aware of the use of the Interactive Customer Evaluation Program and uses it correctly, it can be an effective tool to provide constructive feedback to the appropriate commanders, empowering them to make informed decisions.

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Analyzing the feedback we receive through the ICE Program....

Each quarter, a thorough analysis is conducted of the feedback received through the ICE Program. There are various things looked at such as Customer Service Satisfaction Percentages, Usage Rates, and established trends (both positive and negative) as seen through customer comments.

Below is a brief summary of the analysis that was conducted for the 1st QTR, FY12. A comprehensive statistical analysis is also conducted, which compares the current quarter to the previous quarter and provides a complete breakdown of each of the Installation Support Offices and Directorates and their specific overall performance and participation in the ICE Program.

Data used to compile this report was extracted from the DoD online ICE database and reflects satisfaction ratings for Garrison and non-Garrison agencies. The report includes an overall analysis of 5,646 customer comments submitted.

The Garrison has maintained the effectiveness of the ICE Program; however, there was a 13% decrease in the number of comments submitted from 4QFY11 to 1QFY12 for all of Fort Hood. There was a 25% decrease in the number of comments submitted from 4QFY11 to 1QFY12 for the Garrison. Although the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday periods had somewhat of an effect on the decrease in the feedback, the decrease in itself is pretty significant. Either our customers are happy with the services we provide, they are not telling us or we are not doing an effective job at soliciting feedback from our customers.

Positive Findings:

1. The ICE Program continues to grow in the use of the program and participation from external agencies, specifically CRDAMC, who continues to grow in amount of feedback as well as their overall customer satisfaction rating.
2. Of the total Garrison Directorate feedback received, DPTMS contributed 35%. Additionally, DHR, DOL, Family and MWR and DPW represented 32% of the total Garrison feedback. All of the Installation Support Offices combined represented >1% of the total feedback.
3. Of the "Big Five" directorates (DHR, Family and MWR; DPTMS, DPW and DOL), three are in the green (85% -100%) for a satisfaction rating; Family and MWR and DPW are in the Amber, which remains unchanged from the last quarter report. Family and MWR dropped to 77% (an 8% decrease from last quarter). DPW also dropped 3% in their satisfaction rating from last quarter.
4. Positive comments received this quarter rose from 86% to 89%. The Garrison received a 91% satisfaction rating, up 2% from last quarter. Although the total amount of comment cards received has dropped, the customer satisfaction and employee/staff attitude ratings continue to show that our customers are overall happy with the products and services we provide across the installation.

Negative Findings:

1. There are many issues submitted by customers that are in fact valid issues; however, when the customer fails to leave contact information, it is fairly difficult to obtain the necessary facts related to their issue(s) so that managers can effectively address their concerns. The ICE Program is designed to be an anonymous feedback process, which makes it difficult to address and resolve issues if the customer does not provide contact information.

2. There has been a noticeable amount of negative feedback related to the service and availability of food products at the dining facilities. Either there have been significant changes in the operation of the installation dining facilities or Soldiers are becoming aware of the ICE System as a customer service related feedback system.

3. Another significant trend is that a number of managers are not responding back to the customers in a timely manner as well as addressing their customer's issues. The Fort Hood Customer Service Officer continues to deal with these situations as they arise and has been forwarding certain occurrences up to and through the Garrison Command to the specific organizations.

Comments regarding participation of agencies external to the Garrison:

CRDAMC has increased their participation in ICE substantially, with a noted increase in the number of feedback received as well as an increase in their customer satisfaction levels. Over the last quarter, CRDAMC's feedback represented 35% of the total feedback received by the Garrison. During some of the weekly reports, their feedback almost matched that of the Garrison.

The Garrison will continue to promote the ICE Program using periodic articles in the Sentinel, monthly newsletters and during commander updates with senior leaders. Unit Commanders received 4QFY11 ICE Analysis during the 9 Jan Commander's Update Brief.

Conclusion: Overall, Fort Hood continues to provide excellent customer service to our Soldiers and their Family members; however, across the board, all agencies that provide services to our customers (Soldiers, Family members and civilians) need to be reminded of the importance of servicing these customers and addressing their issues in a timely manner. The services we provide to our customers directly impact our Soldier's individual combat readiness and that of the unit as well. We exist for one reason and that's to take care of our customers. When we lose sight of that, we have lost sight of our very existence.



I'M SORRY THAT I WAS SO RUDE JOE; I THOUGHT YOU WERE A CUSTOMER.

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Customer service can be funny.....

Customer: I tried calling the pizza place for two days, but no one answered.

Service Guy: What number were you dialing?

Customer: 700-1100.

Service Guy: Um, Ma'am, I think those were their hours.

Performance Appraisal Terms and Their Real Meanings

<u>Appraisal Term</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Average Employee.....	Not that bright
Exceptionally Well Qualified	Made no major blunders yet
Active Socially.....	Drinks a lot
Character Above Reproach.	Still one step ahead of the law
Quick Thinking.....	Offers plausible excuses
Careful Thinker.....	Won't make a decision
Plans for advancement.....	Buys drinks for all the boys/girls
Uses Logic on Difficult jobs	Gets someone else to do it
Expresses Themselves Well	Speaks English
Meticulous Attention to Detail.....	A nit picker
Has Leadership Qualities...	Has a loud voice
Exceptionally Good Judgment.....	Lucky
Keen Sense of Humor.....	Knows a lot of jokes
Career Minded.....	Back Stabber
Of Great Value to the Organization.....	Gets to work on time
Relaxed Attitude.....	Sleeps at desk
Independent Worker.....	Nobody knows what he does
Loyal.....	Can't get a job anywhere else

Mistaken identity

Tech Support: "Customer Support, this is David, may I help you?"

Customer: "Hello, yes, it's me."

Tech Support: "Oh, it's me too." [chuckle]

Customer: "No, Esmie. E, s, m, i, e."

Tech Support: "Oh, sorry."

RAC Motoring Service Caller:

"Does your European Breakdown Policy cover me when I am traveling in Australia?"

Operator: "Doesn't the product give you a clue?"

Customer Service

f i a n a l y s i s y r a m m u s l n
e x n c e m p l o y e e l h e c r o f
l s n c m y i l p o y o j c g c i a p
a t t i t u d e u l p x e r a n p e r
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customer
agency
address
provide
help
readiness
attitude
analysis

service
paperwork
family
considerate
support
impact
comment
summary

happy
joy
soldiers
appreciation
satisfaction
civilians
participation
statistics

smile
concern
care
professional
resolution
employee
external
percentage

interactive
issues
research
assistance
teamwork
staff
program



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Customer Service Excellence 5 Key Points You Must Know Today

Customer Service Excellence Strategies should be built around our customers. But what about our angry and irate customers? Angry and irate customers are no joke! They are angry and irate for a reason! In our military culture, we understand that sometimes our customers have no choice but to use us; however, we should not approach our customer base with that mentality.

How many times a day do your CSRs (Customer Service Representatives) take a telephone call only to find an upset, angry or frustrated individual on the other end? Something your organization did or did not do has irritated that customer to the point of emotional distress.

The action and statements your CSRs makes in the first 10 to 20 seconds of that call can make the difference between losing or keeping a customer. The ones you keep, the loyal ones, will continue to do business with you. Those who leave obviously take their future business with them, but even more potentially damaging is the fallout from an unresolved conflict.

How many people does one dissatisfied customer tell about their "poor experience" and what does that equate to in terms of a financial loss? What's the cost of employee turnover because CSRs can no longer stand the conflict and leave? The training provided for CSRs on how to handle conflict resolution and irate customers is crucial to retaining loyal customers and improving the bottom line, even if the bottom line does not include a profit.

So when in conflict, what is it that most customers want? Is it always to "get their way"? Or is it more about feeling like someone actually listened to their concerns, empathized with their position and tried to address their situation or find a solution?

As humans, we have two natural instincts when confronted - fight or flight. At the most basic level, our natural tendency is to either "duke it out" or run away. How we choose to act upon our natural tendencies can vary greatly. Some choose to take the literal description while others choose some polished form of that. And your CSRs get to deal with all of them! We must all do our best to not personalize customers' emotional outbursts.

Are you aware of the "HEARD" technique? This is a very simple technique to help those who deal with customer conflict.

H - Hear what your customer has to say. Let them describe the problem or reason for their emotional distress. Do not interrupt or attempt to cut them off - that, in and of itself, is rude. Give them the opportunity to express their feelings about the situation.

E - Empathize with their situation. It's very calming to someone who is upset to hear the words "I appreciate" or "I respect." By the same token, it's very irritating to hear "I understand." How can one really understand if they are not in the situation?

Train your employees to stay away from using trigger phrases such as "company policy" or "it's a computer problem" or "we can't do that." Customers don't want excuses - they want a solution to their problem! Train your agents to use appropriate phrases that help diffuse the emotion rather than escalate it.

A - Ask questions to determine what can be done to create a solution. The number one question your agents should ask is "What can we do to make this right for you?" It's one of the simplest things you can do to understand the customer.

Most management is afraid to empower their staff with that question for fear the answer will be something ridiculous or costly. Research has proven that in most situations the customer's suggestion for resolving the conflict is less costly than what the company would have offered as the final solution.

R - Respond with a solution to the problem. Creating a solution with the customer on their first telephone call is absolutely vital to customer retention. Research has shown that 90 percent of customers with a problem will continue to do business with the company if they feel the person handling their complaint is genuinely concerned with resolving the situation.

But in order for that to happen, you must first identify the conflicts your agents are most likely to encounter and then train them so they have all the possible solutions. Knowledge is power! But this knowledge will be useless unless you empower your agents to take the corrective actions. They must know what the possible solutions are as well as their level of authority to institute those solutions.

D - Deliver on the promise made to the customer. Make sure there's a clear understanding with the customer as to what will happen and when it will happen. Restate these two items in very simple terms.

If you want to truly set yourself apart from your competition, go the extra mile and call the customer after the problem has been corrected. Ask if they are happy with the solution. Ask if there is anything else you can do for them right now. Let your customer know that you care!

People are just people. And it is our emotions that make us unique. Have you trained your agents on how to understand your customers and their needs? Do your agents understand that your customers are not all the same - and neither are their needs? Do your agents understand the bottom-line value of a satisfied customer? Make sure your customers are being "HEARD" because if they aren't being heard by you, they may just go find someone who will then listen!

Source: ArticlesBase.com (the information in this article was extracted from this source; however, not word for word.)

Customer Service Facts and Figures

Customer Service is not just warm and fuzzies. Striving for a phenomenal reputation in your market makes good economic sense. Consider these facts:

- It can cost up to five times as much to attract a new customer than to retain an existing one.
- The average business never hears from 96% of its unhappy customers.
- For every complaint received, the average company in fact has 26 customers with problems, 6 of which are serious in nature.
- Surprisingly, of the people who have problems, complainers are more likely than non-complainers to do business again with a company that upset them, even if the problem isn't satisfactorily resolved.
- Of customers who register a complaint, between 54% and 70% will do business again with the organization if their complaint is resolved. That figure goes up to an impressive 95% if the customer feels that the complaint was resolved quickly.
- The average customer who has a problem with an organization tells 9 or 10 people about it. Thirteen percent of the people who have a problem with an organization recount the incident to more than 20 people.
- Customers who have complained to an organization and had their complaints satisfactorily resolved tell an average of 5 people about the treatment they receive.

Taken from the Customer Service Series on the new Sideroad: Practical Advice Straight from the Experts, by Dr. John T. Self

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Customer Delight

Improving Customer Service

"It is not about customer service, it is about customer delight" explained Jan Schroeder, Vice President of Education for the *California Culinary Academy*. Listening to her speak, her passion for customer service is obvious. To her, customers are not just the paying guests, but they also include the students and faculty at her academy.

I was also struck by the passion their students exuded when they discussed their education and future careers. What made this even more impressive was that it wasn't just one or two students; it was all of them. When a company's *"internal customers"* are positive and have bought into the culture of their company, it may be the best public relations that can be had. It may also be the best indicator that a company cares about its people.

Ms. Schroeder is zealous about taking care of the smallest details, including how the phone is answered. This giant, yet often-overlooked concept can be either a wonderful public relations tool or the worst public relations nightmare. What makes this especially interesting is that in most cases this fact is not readily apparent to most busy executives. **They aren't even aware that they may be losing customers that have been expensively acquired through advertising and training.**

She recognized a problem and acted on it. She taped the employees as they answered the phones, then played it back to them. The results were startling. When hearing how they sounded to a customer, the level of customer service increased dramatically. It is amazing what a difference it made by simply having employees listen to themselves. Once they actually heard their voice inflection and sense of friendliness and helpfulness they understood immediately what was truly required of them.

To have the goal of 'delighting' customers rather than merely 'servicing' them is a wonderful concept. It made me stop and think how cold and impersonal the word service is when compared to delight. Service is such a cold and impersonal word while delight is warm and personal.

It is a concept that struck me as needed in the service industries especially. Our employees and managers come to work every day, but how many of us really try to rise above servicing our customers. Judging by the turnover in the service industry, the level of complacency in training, and the smugness of companies who still view employees as expendable, the concept of customer delight is a goal that is far out of reach for too many.

In aspiring to get to this level of delight, first there must be someone who has the authority to effect changes in the organization. This person must:

- be passionate about service
- believe in employees as individuals
- understand that the work environment is a place of *dignity*.

Only when these elements are evident can a company move from servicing its customers to actually delighting them. There are people and companies that are able to implement these fundamental changes and that hard work will pay off in lower staff turnover/higher retention and, inevitably, higher sales--all extremely positive results of a culture change. Don't just take my word for it--ask Ms. Schroeder if you want to see someone who practices what she preaches.

Text © Dr. John T. Self, 1997,1998

It's All In The Voice

All businesses use telephones. That's pretty much a given. What is not given is the **effective use of the phone in customer service**. The phone is kind of like the pass in football: there are a possible 3 outcomes and 2 of them are bad.

If anyone in your employment even has the remotest possibility of having to pick up and actually answer the phone, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who can answer the phone?
- Do they know what to say?
- Do they know how to say it?
- Do they come across as knowledgeable after they say hello?

Know who can answer the phone.

This is not asking the musical question of who will *probably* answer the phone, but the much more important question of who *might* answer the phone. Remember our old friend, Murphy's Law: If your boss' boss or your best customer calls, then the worst employee **MUST** answer the phone. It is in your best interest to have everyone that might even remotely pick up the phone know the following:

Know what to say.

If your organization has a stock greeting, then everyone is expected to recite it when answering the phone. Managers, customer service representatives, secretaries, and everyone who answers the phone must know what to say. An easy way to ensure this happens is to put the greeting on a laminated card by the phone and make sure everyone knows where it is. Is this fabricated customer service? Maybe! But it's better than bad customer service.

Know how to say it.

Say it with the appropriate volume level, say it with enthusiastic inflection and say it in an even, natural pace; not hurried and not drawn out. This point is especially important because it sends a clear message to the caller that they are important (or unimportant), even if the knowledge is apparent. Dull, monotone or hurried pace puts the caller in a negative frame of mind even before they have had a "real" opportunity. Speaking too quickly causes the customer to have to ask again because they failed to understand what was being said to begin with. Those who answer the phone should be able to be clear, concise and get straight to the point. Chewing gum while talking on the phone is both distracting and unprofessional.

Come across as knowledgeable after the "hello".

Perfect greeting and inflection is not enough. Customers demand and expect answers when they call and in most cases are looking for instant gratification. Ensure everyone can give directions, basic answers and can locate anyone.

Again, just make a laminated map and place by the phone with landmarks and even a script from various likely locations. Make your own FAQ list (Frequently Asked Questions) and place by each telephone along with extensions. This is basic stuff, but remember that good service always comes from getting the "basics" down pat.

Finally, don't ask a customer if they mind being put on hold at the exact moment that you are putting them on hold. Simply state that you are going to put them on hold – but do not leave them there.

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If an organization wants to achieve "Total Quality", they must be in a continuous improvement mode. Make Sense?

The following Garrison Service Providers were identified as being the "Top" Service Providers for Calendar Year 2011:

DHR – ID Cards Office
DHR – In-Processing
DHR – Military Personnel Center
DHR – Retirement Services
DHR – Transition Center
DHR – Installation Reassignment Processing Branch
DOL – Ammunition Supply Point
DOL – ASP (Transportation, Distribution and Pick-Up)
DOL – Central Issue Facility
DOL – Transportation Motor Pool
DPTMS – North Fort Hood Operations
DPTMS – Force Management Branch
DPTMS – Visual Information Services Branch
DPTMS – Installation Security and Intelligence Office
DPTMS – Medical Simulation Training
DPTMS – Mission Command Training Center
DPTMS – Training Support Center Branch
DPW – Recycle Program
Family and MWR – Employment Readiness Branch
Family and MWR – CYSS, Kid On-Site
Family and MWR – CYSS, School Liaison Office
Family and MWR – CYSS, SKIES Unlimited
Legal – Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) Outreach Counsel Office

All recipients received at 50 or more comment cards for the year, received a 90% or higher overall customer satisfaction rating and achieved a 4.25 or higher in Employee/Staff Attitude rating.

Congratulations to all the employees that support these service providers and provide excellent customer service to our customers on a daily basis.

If there is someone who is doing an excellent job at providing customer service and they should be recognized, they can be featured in this monthly newsletter. Send a digital photo with a short write-up about what they are doing in the photo and what they do in providing customer service to the Greater Fort Hood Community. Send your submission to Dale Cowan at the email address listed below. We would like to get their accomplishment noted and published for all to see.



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